

**REMARKS**

This Preliminary Amendment is being filed together with a Request for Continued Examination in lieu of an Appeal Brief.

As the Examiner will note, component (D) in claim 1 has been amended to recite that the carbon black is present in an amount of at least 1 part by weight. Thus, the amount of carbon black is returned to that as recited when the present application was originally filed.

In reviewing the present claims, the relationships (1) clay + silica = 40-79 pbw and (2) clay + silica + carbon black = 41-80 pbw are important features of the present invention. Thus, with this as the starting point any values under the ranges of clay, silica and carbon black as set forth in the claims can be utilized as long as the relationships (1) and (2) are satisfied.

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance. An action on the merits of claims 1, 3, 4, 6 and 7 is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Joseph A. Kolasch Reg. No. 22,463 at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

Andrew D. Meikle

Registration No.: 32,868

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant